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## BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTES.

RELIGION AND CULTURE. A Critical Survey of Methods of Approach to Religious Phenomena. By *Frederick Schleiter, Ph. D.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1919. Pp. x, 206. Price, \$2.00.

It was natural enough, in the halcyon days before the war, to believe in an ever-progressing evolution of life, particularly the life of the human race. Applying this view to the religious beliefs of mankind, two questions had to be answered: the question as to the origin of these beliefs, and the question as to their ultimate transformation. That between these two extremes a sort of pedigree could be established, assigning to each religious phase its place in the procession of cultural history, there seemed to be little doubt, theories of transmission, of "psychic accident," etc., notwithstanding. If the perspective was taken large enough, at least the possibility of such a pedigree apparently had to be admitted, no matter how much dispute might arise regarding its actual shape and ramifications.

It is this sort of apriorism that is finally swept away by Dr. Schleiter's book. "Among all the attempts," he contends (pp. 39f), "which have been made to set forth the genealogical relations alleged to exist among religious practices and ideas, few, indeed, have involved a serious test of the hypothetical scheme by means of concrete historical studies....their relative merit is to be judged largely on the ground of obvious plausibility and ingenuity, and the inner logical consistency and symmetry involved in the process of their own unfolding." Thus he comes to the conclusion (p. 42) that "with strict regard to the actual data, we are justified in considering the fundamental religious ideas of man as lying on the same chronological and logical level, and involving, as it were, so many empirical possibilities which are liable to occur and recur, sporadically. Ideas of magical power, spirits, emanations, deities, an All-Father, etc., are irregularly and willy-nilly distributed among various cultural stages and historical periods and cannot be stated in terms of a necessary genealogical series."

Dr. Schleiter's method of argumentation consists mainly in pointing out the inadequacy of methods hitherto thought fairly reliable. In this respect the comparative method in all its various applications forms the chief object of his attack, tearing, as it does, the phenomena to be investigated from their actual cultural setting, thus basing its conclusions on heterogeneous and, in fact, non-comparable material. The use of the concept of causality as a *fundamentum comparationis* appears to the author particularly vicious, and he devotes three chapters, almost one third of his book, to its elimination in this context. His weapon is the "principle of convergence," applied here for the first time to a philosophical category. Of the striking results obtained the following may serve as an illustration (pp. 175ff):

"The attribution of causal agency to objects or elements....is probably the result of subsidiary reflection—the turning-back of thought upon processes

already in existence. In many cases, activities have been preceded by mental processes characterized by a high degree of emotional tension....In cases of this type....there may arise the tendency or, indeed, the necessity for it to drain off or express itself in overt behavior....Thus, instead of merely kicking a tree or stone in impotent rage at his enemy, which is an immediate dramatized expression of what the primitive man would like to do to him, he proceeds to elaborate and amplify these haphazard acts—he constructs an image and then performs a more or less extensive operation upon it.”

It is plain that Dr. Schleiter goes here beyond the observable facts—he is delving into the psychology of the subconscious (cf. especially pp. 161ff). Viewed from another angle, he casts light upon the gropings of the human mind at a stage far more primitive than at present found anywhere on the face of the globe.

Such implications are, of course, apt to vitiate the complete abandonment of the developmental theory of culture origin as found on page 42 (see quotation above), and Dr. Schleiter was probably aware of the fact. At any rate, he cautions us, in the very last paragraph of his book, against drawing just those conclusions which a rigorous interpretation of his views would lead to. “We do not mean,” he says, “to attack, indiscriminately and at large, the processes of generalization and abstraction and to contend that the proper study of all cultural phenomena consists in the return to concrete particularity in such a manner as to involve nothing more than descriptive characterizations and a gossip interest which finds emotional consolation in mere *disjecta membra*....” Instead, he merely wants to counsel “much more critical caution than is customary” in the universalizing of particular aspects of primitive civilization. This advice will have to be heeded, for nobody who has a stake in the field can afford to ignore Dr. Schleiter’s book, whether he may like it or not.

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THE IDEA OF IMMORTALITY: ITS DEVELOPMENT AND VALUE. (The Baird Lecture, 1917.) By *George Galloway, D. Phil., D.D.* Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1919. Pp. viii, 234. Price, 9s. net.

Professor Galloway gives a rapid summary of what Herbert Spencer calls the insoluble problem—human immortality. The book is a small one, but ably summarizes the main and familiar lines of argument. Science can supply us neither with valid grounds for rejecting nor sufficient reasons for accepting the doctrine of human immortality. Dr. Galloway’s conclusion as to the evidence provided by “psychical research” is *non liquet*. Metaphysics can give no proof of immortality, though Dr. MacTaggart argues that “the Absolute has eternally differentiated itself in finite centers, which neither come into being nor pass away. The human ego is one of these finite differentiations and therefore is eternal and immortal.” The trouble is that Dr. MacTaggart does not prove the Absolute must be differentiated in this manner, and if this *were* so, that the human soul is one of these differentiations (p. 146). The metaphysicians following Kant emphasize the desire for immortality as its own vindication, and this ethical argument has, with Dr. Galloway, great weight. There remain what are called religious evidences, in especial the Resurrection of Christ. Dr. Galloway, like many modern theologians, holds that the Resurrection, far from proving immortality, requires faith in that doctrine to make it credible. “The